



NEW YORK STATE DENTAL FOUNDATION

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My name is Stacy McIllduff, and I am the Executive Director of the New York State Dental Foundation; a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working alongside our parent organization, the New York State Dental Association (NYSDA). Since 1980 our Foundation has worked to improve access to oral health care for underserved New Yorkers and to support outreach, education, and workforce development initiatives across the state.

I am writing to respectfully urge the Legislature to include **\$1.3 million in the FY 2027 State Budget** to support ***My Healthy Smile NY***, the Foundation's statewide oral health access and care coordination program. While we appreciate the Governor's continued focus on healthcare access and affordability, the omission of *My Healthy Smile NY* from the Executive Budget represents a missed opportunity to build upon a program that is already demonstrating measurable impact.

Launched as a pilot initiative, ***My Healthy Smile NY*** deploys **Community Dental Health Coordinators (CDHCs)**—specially trained dental professionals who connect underserved individuals to dental care, coordinate services, and address barriers such as transportation, insurance navigation, and provider availability. CDHCs work directly within communities and in partnership with a network of volunteer and participating dentists to ensure that patients receive timely, appropriate care and are connected to dental homes whenever possible.

Since its launch, ***My Healthy Smile NY*** has supported community dental events, coordinated free dental care for veterans, and conducted oral health screenings across multiple regions of the state. These efforts have provided direct care to individuals who might otherwise rely on hospital emergency departments for dental pain—an approach that is costly, inefficient, and does not resolve underlying dental conditions.

By addressing urgent dental needs in community-based settings and facilitating preventive and follow-up care, ***My Healthy Smile NY*** helps **divert avoidable dental-related emergency department visits**, generating meaningful cost savings for the State while improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

The requested \$1.3 million investment would allow the program to expand into **Western New York and the New York City metropolitan area**, increase the number of CDHCs serving high-need communities, and strengthen the statewide network of dental providers willing to serve uninsured and underinsured New Yorkers. This investment builds upon private philanthropic support already secured by the Foundation and represents a fiscally responsible strategy for improving access to care.

We respectfully ask the Legislature to recognize the demonstrated value of the Community Dental Health Coordinator model and to include funding for ***My Healthy Smile NY*** in the FY 2027 enacted budget. Doing so will advance oral health equity, reduce unnecessary healthcare costs, and ensure that more New Yorkers receive the dental care they need to live healthy, productive lives.